

Legislative Testimony
Public Health Committee
HB5541 AAC Services Provided by Dental Professionals and Certification for Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner
Wednesday, March 21st, 2012
Brenton J. Lahey, DMD, MS
President, CT Society of Periodontists

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health committee, my name is Brenton Lahey and I have been practicing dentistry for ten years. I currently have offices in Windsor, West Hartford, and Torrington. I am a specialist in the field of periodontics, and the current president of the Connecticut Society of Periodontists. I thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony to you in opposition to HB 5541.

I would like to start out by stating that as a product of the Department of Public Health's scope of practice process, for which my professional organization supported, I am in support of allowing hygienists to perform Interim Therapeutic Restorations (IRT) as referenced briefly in line 223 of this bill, and for allowing hygienists and dental assistants to become Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries which is in section 2 of this bill. These are competencies and roles that numerous states already allow for and could have an immediate impact on access and utilization. However, I am staunchly opposed to sections 3 through 6 which attempt to create an "Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner."

It is my understanding that the purpose of this bill is to expand the access to dental care for the citizens Connecticut. This is a noble goal which I am sure every dentist in the state supports. I like the rest of my dental colleagues spend countless hours a year performing pro bono dental work to those that need it most. My concern is that in an effort to expand access to dental care, you are falling victim to the national hygiene organization's desperate desire to expand their scope of practice. To my knowledge there are few if any states that allow a dental hygienist to effectively practice dentistry independent of a supervising dentist. By supporting this bill you would be radically changing the way dentistry is practiced in this country, and doing so without any proof that it will actually accomplish your stated goal of increasing access to care. By contrast, the other two measures in this bill that I support have already been tried in numerous states across the country. The Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries (EFDA) are present in offices in Kentucky where I spent three years as a resident. They are valuable and trusted members of the dental team that allow one dentist to double the number of patients he or she sees in a given day. If Connecticut had these valuable team members in its community health centers and private dental offices, one supervising dentist could drastically increase the number of patients that he or she could serve. The EFDA is a proven and effective way to increase access to dental care for the citizens of this state. The Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner is anything but that.

In closing, I would like to again respectfully thank the members of the Public Health committee for allowing me to submit this testimony and would urge you to oppose this bill. If you should have any questions I will do my best to make myself available at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Brenton J. Lahey, D.M.D
1080 Day Hill Rd.
Windsor, CT. 06095
(860) 683-0243
brentonlahey@yahoo.com